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Detroit District

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Soo Locks open, Canadian tanker first ship through the locks to open shipping season

DETROIT – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced the world famous Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie Mich., opened Wednesday, March 25, marking the beginning of the Great Lakes shipping season.

The 450-foot Canadian tanker the M.T. Algosar was the first ship to clear the Poe Lock at 5:15 p.m. Windy weather delayed the Algosar, which was up bound carrying fuel oil to Thunder Bay, from passing through the Poe Lock earlier Wednesday.

Since Jan. 15, the Poe Lock, one of the Soo's two operational locks, was closed and underwent an inspection and maintenance during the winter shutdown. The second operational lock at the Soo, the MacArthur Lock, has been closed since Dec. 15. The MacArthur Lock is undergoing maintenance and is expected to reopen later next month.

All the work on both locks have been done by 60 Corps employees, many of whom normally would have been subject to a layoff.

In 2008, 8,461 vessels passed through the Soo Locks, carrying 80.6 million tons of cargo, mainly iron ore, coal, stone and other bulk products.

Operation and maintenance of the Soo Locks falls under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District. Located on the St. Marys River, the locks have been a part of the Corps' navigation mission since 1881.

For more information about the Soo Locks please contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District Public Affairs Officer, Lynn Duerod, at (313) 226-4680, or Al Klein at the Corps' Soo Area Office at (906) 635-3464.

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